Explanatory Notes for the 2000 Academic Performance Index Base Report

These *Explanatory Notes* are designed to assist educators and other interested parties in interpreting the *2000 Academic Performance Index (API) Base Report*. The *Explanatory Notes* provide details with respect to Academic Performance Index (API) calculations, growth target calculations, and ranking procedures beyond the explanations and footnotes that appear on the report.

The Public Schools Accountability Act

The API is the centerpiece of the statewide accountability system in California public education. The Public Schools Accountability Act (PSAA) of 1999 (Chapter 3, Statutes of 1999), requires that the California Department of Education (CDE) annually calculate APIs for California public schools and publish school rankings based on these indices. The PSAA also requires the establishment of a minimum five-percent annual API growth target for each school as well as an overall statewide API performance target for all schools. A school that meets either API growth or performance targets is eligible for rewards under the Governor's Performance Award Program. If a school fails to meet its annual growth target, it may be identified for the Immediate Intervention / Underperforming Schools Program (II/USP).

On November 9, 1999, the State Board of Education:

- adopted a 1999 base-year API
- defined the five-percent annual API growth target
- established an interim statewide API performance target

These actions cleared the way for the publication of the *1999 API Base Report* in January 2000 and the *1999-2000 API Growth Report* in October 2000.

Eventually, the API will incorporate a number of indicators; however, for 2000 the API will continue to consist solely of results from the Stanford 9 norm-referenced assessment that is administered in conjunction with the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program. Other legally-required indicators are unavailable for inclusion in 2000.

Changes from the 1999 API (Base)

This report reflects two major changes from the *1999 API Base Report*:

- the inclusion of APIs for small schools with 11 to 99 pupils with valid Stanford 9 test scores
- a change in the district mobility exclusion for some middle and high schools

In July 2000 the State Board of Education adopted a framework for the further development of the alternative accountability system. As part of that system, the CDE is generating

APIs for schools with 11 to 99 valid Stanford 9 scores. These APIs are "asterisked" to emphasize that they are subject to greater fluctuation than APIs for larger schools. Schools with asterisked APIs will not receive ranks, growth targets or subgroup APIs. Future eligibility for school awards or interventions programs is contingent upon legislative action, including the appropriation of funds for awards to schools in the alternative accountability system.

Regarding pupils in high school districts, a recent change in the law (Chapters 71 and 695, Statutes of 2000) requires that test results for any first-year student in a high school district be included in the school's API if that student came to the district from an elementary school district where students normally matriculate to the high school district. The 2000 API (Base) Report marks the first application of this rule. As a result, the 2000 Base API will differ from the 2000 Growth API for a number of middle and high schools in high school districts.

Core Elements

Certain core elements appear throughout the 2000 API Base Report. They include:

- STAR 2000 Percent Tested
- Number of Students Included in the API
- 2000 API (Base)
- 2000 Statewide Rank
- 2000 Similar Schools Rank
- 2000-2001 Growth Target
- 2001 API Target

STAR 2000 Percent Tested

This percentage is calculated by dividing the number of students tested by the number of students enrolled on the first day of testing in grades 2-11. The total enrollment is adjusted by subtracting the number of students in those grades exempted from testing due to Individualized Education Program (IEP) statements as well as minus the number of students in those grades exempted from testing due to parent/guardian written request. The number is rounded down to the next whole number (e.g., 94.9=94). The STAR 2000 Apportionment Information Report is the source of these data.

Number of Students Included in the API

This is the number of students whose Stanford 9 results are included in the school's API. In determining which test results should be included in the API, the CDE employed the same pupil exclusion rules used in calculating school-level STAR results that appear on the Internet at:

<http://star.cde.ca.gov>

1. A pupil record was excluded if the test administration accommodation for the pupil was more than one grade out of level (e.g., a sixth grader tested lower than 5th grade or higher than 7th grade).
2. A pupil record was excluded if any of the following four test administration accommodations were marked "yes" for all content areas:
   a. Braille
   b. flexible scheduling
   c. revised test format
   d. use of aids and/or aides
3. A particular content area of a record was excluded if the percentile rank for that content area is not between 1 and 99.
4. A particular content area of a pupil record was excluded if the test administration accommodation for that content area was marked "yes" for any of the four reasons under #2 above.

In addition, to comply with provisions of the PSAA regarding student mobility, a record is excluded if the pupil first attended the district in the current year as indicated on the STAR answer

document. An exception to this general rule is made for a first-year pupil in a high school district from an elementary school district from which pupils normally matriculate to the high school district (see page 2).

2000 API (Base)

The 2000 API (Base) summarizes a school's performance on the 2000 STAR. It is on a scale of 200 to 1000. It is based on the performance of individual pupils on STAR content area tests as measured through national percentile rankings (NPRs). In some instances, APIs are also calculated for student subgroups at a school in order to ascertain whether the school meets the "comparable improvement" criterion (see page 5). For details on the calculation of the 2000 API, please consult the document titled *Calculating the 2000 Base Year Academic Performance Index (API)*, which is accessible through the PSAA web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/psaa/api>.

For schools with grade configurations that include both grades 8 and 9, the API for these schools was the average of the APIs for the two grade configuration segments weighted by the number of pupils with valid scores in the two segments. For example, for a K-12 school, the API was the weighted average of the APIs for grades 2-8 and for grades 9-11. This procedure is necessary because the structure of the test varies between grades 2-8 and 9-11.

2000 Statewide Rank

All schools that receive APIs are ranked in deciles by grade level of instruction: elementary, middle, and high. A rank of 10 is the highest and 1 is the lowest. Each decile in each school type contains 10% of all schools of that type. Small schools with asterisked APIs do not receive statewide ranks and are not used in the calculation of the statewide ranks.

2000 Similar Schools Rank

All schools that receive non-asterisked APIs are also ranked in deciles by school type when compared to schools with similar characteristics. The PSAA specifies these characteristics to include:

- Pupil mobility
- Pupil ethnicity
- Pupil socioeconomic status
- Percentage of teachers who are fully credentialed
- Percentage of teachers who hold emergency credentials
- Percentage of pupils who are English language learners
- Average class size per grade level
- Whether the schools operate multitrack year-round educational programs

To derive these ranks, the CDE employed standard statistical procedures to generate a school characteristics index. All legally-required characteristics were considered as part of these procedures. The characteristics index was then employed in the following fashion to determine the "similar schools rank" of an individual school:

- A comparison group for an individual school was formed by treating that school's characteristics index as a median and taking the fifty schools immediately above and the fifty immediately below by characteristics index. In the event that the individual school's characteristics index was within fifty of either the top or the bottom of the statewide distribution, that school's comparison group became either the top 100 schools by characteristics index or bottom 100 as appropriate.
- The 100 schools in the comparison group were separated into deciles according to the value of their 2000 APIs.

- The API of the individual school was then compared to the APIs of the schools in its comparison group.
- The individual school was assigned the appropriate decile rank.

2000-2001 Growth Target

A school's growth target is calculated by taking five percent of the distance between a school's 2000 API Base and the interim statewide performance target of 800. For any school with a 2000 API Base of 781 to 799, the annual growth target is one point. Any school with an API of 800 or more must maintain an API of at least 800. Small schools with asterisked APIs do not receive growth targets.

2001 API Target

The API target is the sum of the 2000 API Base and the growth target, except for schools with a 2000 API Base of 800 or more. Once again, small schools with asterisked APIs do not receive API targets.

Structure of the Report

The *2000 API Base Report* is composed of two parts:

1. *List of Schools*
2. *School Report*

List of Schools

This list includes all schools in a district or county for which the CDE has calculated an API. The schools are listed alphabetically by type (elementary, middle, and high). **The PSAA requires that schools be placed in one of these three types of schools for purposes of school rankings.** Schools with non-traditional grade configurations, e.g., 7-12, have been placed into the school type that they chose when they were assigned a CDS (county-district-school) code. Small schools (between 11 and 99 pupils with valid Stanford 9 test scores) appear on the list under a separate heading.

The CDE did not calculate APIs for:

- Very small schools with fewer than 11 pupils with valid Stanford 9 test scores
- County-administered schools
- Community day schools
- Alternative schools
- Continuation schools
- Independent schools

These schools will be part of an alternative accountability system currently under development.

In addition, a school must test at least 65 percent of students in each STAR content area in order to receive an overall API. Schools that failed to do so will not receive an API in 2000.

School Report

A *School Report* or notation about a missing report is generated for each school on the *List of Schools*. In addition to the common core elements, the *School Report* includes:

- data on subgroups
- school demographic characteristics

Reports for small schools do not include APIs and growth targets for ethnic or socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroups. Small schools do not receive ranks or growth targets. These schools appear in under a separate heading on the *List of Schools*. Each school receives its own *School Report*, but without ethnic and socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroup data.

Subgroups

The PSAA defines a "numerically significant ethnic or socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroup" as a subgroup "that constitutes at least 15 percent of a school's total pupil population and consists of at least 30 pupils." Also, in light of the sizeable enrollments at many California schools, Senate Bill 1552 (Chapter 695 of the Statures of 2000) has enacted an additional criterion. If a subgroup defined by ethnicity or socioeconomic disadvantage constitutes at least 100 pupils, i.e., at least 100 pupils with valid STAR scores, that subgroup is "numerically significant" and required to demonstrate comparable improvement, even if it does not constitute 15 percent of the school population. **These numerical criteria (15 percent and 30 pupils, or 100 pupils) will be computed on the basis of the number of pupils with valid Stanford 9 scores for that subgroup.**[1]

The school is responsible for demonstrating comparable improvement only for those subgroups that are numerically significant in both 2000 and 2001. Ethnic/racial subgroups include the following:

- African American not Hispanic
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Filipino
- Hispanic or Latino
- Pacific Islander
- White not Hispanic

According to the definition adopted by the State Board of Education, the "socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroup" consists of pupils who meet either one of two criteria:

1) Neither of the pupil's parents has received a high school diploma

OR

2) The pupil participates in the free or reduced price lunch program.

A pupil who is a member of the socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroup is also a member of one of the racial/ethnic subgroups. Therefore, it is possible that the total percentage of students in all numerically significant subgroups at a school may exceed 100.

Under the definition adopted by the State Board of Education, "comparable improvement" requires that each numerically significant subgroup must meet or exceed 80 percent of the 2000-2001 schoolwide growth target. The 2000-2001 subgroup target was calculated by first multiplying the schoolwide target by .8 and then rounding the product to the nearest whole number.

There are four minor exceptions to this rule:

1. For subgroups within schools with schoolwide APIs between 781 and 799, i.e., approaching the statewide interim performance target of 800, the annual growth target was one point.
2. Regardless of the schoolwide API, subgroups already at or above 800 had to continue to meet the statewide interim performance target of 800.
3. In schools with 2000 APIs of 800 or more, subgroups with an API of less than 800 had to make growth of at least one point.

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1 **For schools with grade configurations that include both grades 8 and 9:** The subgroup APIs are determined in the same manner as the schoolwide API (see page 3).

4. In instances where 80 percent of the schoolwide target results in a subgroup target that would exceed the distance from the subgroup API to 800, the subgroup target equaled the distance to 800.

School Demographic Characteristics
Along with subgroup data, the *School Report* includes the demographic characteristics on which the school characteristics index for the 2000 API Base similar schools rankings will be based. The data on which the percentages and rates rest were collected from two sources:

1. October 1999 CBEDS data collection (information on teacher credentials, multi-track year round participation, and class size)
2. 2000 Stanford 9 student answer documents (information on ethnic/racial distribution, parental education level, participation in free or reduced price lunch program, school mobility, English language learners)

Regarding information taken from CBEDS:

- It is possible for one teacher to be in both the fully-credentialed and emergency-credential categories; therefore, the total of the percentages for "Fully credentialled teachers" and "Teachers with emergency credentials" may exceed 100.
- Average class sizes were derived from the enrollment data reported on the Professional Assignment Information Form (PAIF).
- "Core academic courses in departmentalized programs**"** reflects average class size in the following subject areas: English, Foreign Languages, Math, Science, and Social Science.

Regarding background characteristics derived from the Stanford 9 student answer document:

- School mobility is the percentage of students who first attended the school in the current year, excluding students enrolled in the lowest grade at a school. It is used as a background characteristic only. The criterion for excluding a score from the API calculation is **district** mobility, i.e., any student who began continuous enrollment in the district during the year tested.

The School Demographic Characteristics that appear on the *School Report* are used in the formation of the similar schools comparison groups for the similar schools ranking.

STAR 2000 Participation Information
The School Report also includes the data elements on which the STAR 2000 Percent Tested (see page 2) is based. These elements include:

- Enrollment in grades 2-11 on the first day of Testing
- Number of students excused by IEP statement
- Number of students excused by parent/ guardian written request
- Number of students tested

Data Discrepancies

If there are discrepancies between the official 2000 API (Base) printed in the report and your own local estimated APIs, you should first determine that the same set of Stanford 9 test scores were used in both sets of calculations. One way to verify the number of student test scores used in the official API calculation is to begin by examining the STAR Internet reports. The exclusion rules (see pages 2-3) have already been applied on these reports. The next step is to apply the district mobility exclusion to these numbers in order to derive the number of student test scores used in

the API calculations. At this point, if the number of student test scores match the official number of tests included in the API, grade by grade and for all content areas, then the API calculation results should match. Background characteristics provided for the school will only be used in the calculations of the 2000 API (Base) similar schools rank.

Contacts

If you have further questions about the API, growth targets, school rankings, or numerically significant subgroups, please contact the Educational Planning and Information Center via e-mail at epic@cde.ca.gov or by phone at (916) 657-2273.